

# RURAL RESIDENCE OF OLDER AMERICANS

State-by-State Statistical Tables  
Based on the  
1990 Census of Population and Housing

April 1996

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Bethesda, MD 20814-2434

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# RURAL RESIDENCE OF OLDER AMERICANS

## Introduction

This document presents State tables of statistical information on the number and proportion of elderly Americans residing in rural areas of each State. The data shown in the tables are based on the 1990 census. Specifically, they are drawn from special tabulations produced by the Bureau of the Census for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging. The special tabulations were produced under the 1990 Census of Population and Housing's Special Tabulation Program and were issued in March 1994.

Some background on the origins of the 1990 census data will place the report in perspective. For the 1990 census, each housing unit in the country received one of two versions of the census questionnaire: either a short version containing baseline population and housing information (such as age, race/ethnicity, marital status, type of housing unit); or a long form containing those items on the short form plus additional questions (such as items related to primary language spoken in the home, other details about facilities in the home, income, and mobility). Thus, the entire population received the short-form items, while a sample of about one in six housing units received the additional items on the long form. All respondents were to fill out either the short form or the long form and return it to the Bureau of the Census.

In the technical documentation accompanying the Special Tabulation on Aging component of 1990 Census of Population and Housing, "urban" was defined as comprising all territory, population, and housing units in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 or more persons outside urbanized areas. More specifically, "urban" consists of territory, persons, and housing units in:

- places of 2,500 or more persons incorporated as cities, villages, boroughs (except in Alaska and New York), and towns (except in the six New England States, New York, and Wisconsin), but excluding the rural portions of "extended cities";
- census designated places of 2,500 or more persons; and
- other territories, incorporated or unincorporated, included in urbanized areas.

Territory, population, and housing units not classified as "urban," constitute "rural."

The State tables in this document present data on the percent of rural elderly by planning and service area (PSA). A PSA is a geographic area that the Older Americans Act of 1965 designated that State Agencies on Aging use for administrative purposes. Each State subdivides itself into PSAs, designating a public or private nonprofit agency as the central administrative agency on aging for that PSA. A PSA typically covers one county, for example, or a group of counties together. The State tables in this document have not only State-level interest but can be used to compare States regarding the urban/rural distribution of their older residents. For example, in 9 States more than one-half of their residents 60 years old or older live in rural areas and 10 States have fewer than 15 percent of their residents 60 or older living in rural areas.